

Long Coffee house Sep: 17: 1794

No. 103

A SHORT
PRESERVATIVE
AGAINST THE
DOCTRINES

Reviv'd by

Mr. Whitefield and his Adherents.

Sunday

17
No 163

A SHORT
PRESERVATIVE

AGAINST THE

DOCTRINES

REVISED BY

MR. WYCKOFF and his Adherents.

8th Sept 1739 A SHORT

PRESERVATIVE

AGAINST THE

DOCTRINES

REVIV'D BY

Mr. *Whitefield* and his Adherents.

BEING

A SUPPLEMENT to the BP. of
LONDON's late PASTORAL LETTER.

R. Gibson app

By a CURATE of LONDON.

*As thou art righteous thyself, thou orderest all things righteously:
thinking it not agreeable with thy Power, to condemn him
that hath not deserved to be punished. Wisd. xii. 15.*

L O N D O N :

Printed, and sold by H. WHITRIDGE, at the Royal
Exchange, 1739.

(Price Six-Pence.)

*Dr
Burr
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Burr
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PRESEBVATIVE

AGAINST THE

DOCTRINES

Reviv'd &c.

Mr. White and his Adherents.

BEING

A SUPPLEMENT to the Book of
LONDON'S late PASTORAL LETTER.

46

By the CURATE of LONDON.

177

It is not necessary to say, that the
writing is not intended to be
that kind of light to be put
in the eyes of the people.

LONDON:

Printed, and sold by the Booksellers, at the Strand.



A SHORT

PRESERVATIVE

AGAINST THE

DOCTRINES

Mr. WHITEFIELD and his
Adherents, &c.

IT is a very unpleasant Reflection, That Religion, which was design'd alone for the Happiness of Mankind, should almost every where, thro' the Mistakes or Wickedness of Men, have at all times a quite contrary Effect.

In some Countries, It is made use of as the Mean to deprive Men of great Part of their Property, by assuring or terrifying them

them to devote their Substance to what are call'd Religious Ufes.

In Others, Not only the Produce of the Labour and Industry of Mankind are demanded, under the Colour of Serving the Ends of Religion: But it is made a Part of Religion itself, to yield up the Understanding to the publick Dictate; and to make a Sacrifice of the Intelligence of the Soul, to the Voice of Human Authority.

And where These are not readily and quiescently submitted to, greater Demands are still made, under the prostituted Name of Religion; and the Liberties, the Lives of Men are devoted, frequently in the most cruel Manner, to appease the imaginary Divinity, or the incensed Devotionalist.

This has been, this is, too much the Case in all the known World.

And what is yet more melancholy, This has been, and is, not the least so, where the

the Claims of Revelation have been most insisted on.

Even in this Country, enlighten'd as it is; where good Sense, the Offspring of Liberty, is without a Complement equal, if not superior, to That of any Neighbouring Climate; there is scarce a Period of our History, where some great Disorder or other has not been the Fruit of our Religious Contests.

These are Observations more readily agreed in, than the Occasions of them are endeavour'd to be prevented: Tho' every benevolent Man will, at all times, give his Assistance to keep off the threaten'd Mischief.

Since the Accession of the Present Royal Family, this Part of the World has been quieter, with respect to Religion, than at any time for so long a Period together: I mean, Men have carry'd on their Debates upon Religious Subjects, without being liable to those Terrors, or coercive Operations,

tions, that in former times were exerted against those who happen'd to differ with the Majority.

Truth has had that just Regard paid to it, as to be supposed at least equally capable to defend itself, as Error; and the Favourers of Error have been withheld from injuring the Friends of Truth.

Long, very long, may this be thy Boast,
O happy *Britain* ! favourite Isle !

In this agreeable Situation, it is no Wonder that Diversity of Opinion has publickly appear'd. It is scarce possible Men should think exactly alike upon every, scarce on any, Subject: And while Freedom of Debate is allow'd, Men will, as they ought, publish their Sentiments; without any other Reserve, than what Decency and good Manners require.

Thus, while good Humour and Temper are preserv'd, let Enquiry go on; tho'
Opinions

Opinions should multiply, and be as various as the different Features of each Enquirer.

Let Charity be preserv'd; and leave Truth to shift for itself.

At this Time, therefore, and under this auspicious Influence, I shall briefly examine some Doctrines lately reviv'd: which, to me, appear so far from being true, and agreeable to Christianity; that they sap the Foundations of all Religion, as they destroy every Right Notion of Almighty God.

Our Excellent Diocesan has lately favour'd the World with a *Pastoral Letter*; in which he has justly shewn what is not, and what is, True Religion, as far as concerns Men's general Conduct; That mere External Worship, and a Partial Abstinence from Sin, are not real Christianity; but that our outward Attendance on Religious Appointments must be accompany'd

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with proper sincere inward Dispositions: and, That the Practice of our Duty must be uniform and constant; in an Endeavour to avoid not only gross Sins, but every Immorality.

His Lordship has also warn'd the People of his Diocese against the Extrême of *Religious Enthusiasm*; and shewn the Uncertainty and Ill-groundedness at least of the general Pretences of such Enthusiasts. But his Lordship has not here exhausted his Subject.

In Conformity therefore to the said good Purpose, this Paper is design'd to go more fully into the Examination of the Grounds of the present Enthusiasm; and to consider the Doctrines lately reviv'd, which gave Rise to his Lordship's just and proper Caution.

The admired Author of *The Whole Duty of Man* has a Tract, intitled *Mischief arising from Mistakes concerning Almighty God*.

God. That valuable Writer consider'd a right Idea of the Divine Being, as the necessary Touchstone, by which to try all Religious Opinions; and that a just Sentiment concerning the Moral Attributes of the Deity, was the Only Security against Religious Error, whether of the Gloomy or Enthusiastic Kind.

Let us apply his Rule in the Present Case.

The Doctrines lately advanc'd, are well known to be the System of *Calvinism*; at least, all the Points insisted on, are Parts of that System. They are,

" The Doctrine of the Literal Fall; and the Certain Eternal Condemnation and Punishment due to All Mankind on that Account.

That All Men are by Nature on that Account not only obnoxious to the Divine Wrath; but are also incapable of doing any thing towards their Restoration to

the Divine Favour, or to avert the impending Judgment. That therefore,

They must be Regenerated, or New-born; not by any thing they can do Themselves, or apply for to be done by Another; being as to That as incapable as dead Men to restore themselves to Natural Life; But they must be born of the Holy Ghost; an Expression as far as it is understood, that signifies the Operation in or by Them of a New Power of Action, distinct from their Natural Faculties; and this conferr'd, not on All, but on Some, or a Few; and that at the mere Will of the Bestower.

That every good Action, that is, every acceptable Action of such Regenerated Person, is the Effect of this Power: And that every equally appearing good Action, which is not so produc'd, is so far from being acceptable to God, that it partakes of the Nature of Sin, and subjects the Performer of it to the Divine Displeasure. And, That

That even the good Actions of Regenerated Persons do not justify them before God, or render them at all acceptable to Him: But that they are solely and alone justify'd, or render acceptable to the God of all Mercy, by the Personal Righteousness of Christ imputed, or convey'd over, to every such Regenerated Person."

Let us now review these Doctrines with the Freedom that becomes Men and Christians; and let us try them by that excellent Rule, their Agreement with the Moral Attributes and Perfections of Almighty God.

There are some Truths so clear and plain, and some Errors so opposite to the first general Sentiments of Mankind, that there are no Mediums that can possibly render them more certain. These are therefore call'd Self-evident. The First of the above-mention'd Doctrines, when reduc'd to a Proposition, is of this Nature: For, Can there be a more certain Truth,

Truth, and more discernible at first View, than that a Being of Perfect Equity and Impartiality cannot punish a Second Person, for the Fault of a First; where the Second Person was no Ways accessory to the Crime of the First; nay, did not exist at the Time when the Crime was committed, and so could not possibly any way have prevented it. A Supposition of this Kind is so contrary to the first Principles of Equity and Justice, that it carries in it the Idea of the greatest Cruelty: the Punish'd Person being in such Case so far from being punish'd agreeable to Truth and Justice, that he might as properly and equitably be punish'd, though no Crime had been committed at all.

This Supposition takes in only the next Person to the Offender; and carries the Punishment no farther than what is adequate to the Offence. How much more Unequal then would it be, to take in Numbers into the Supposition, as the Doctrine complain'd of does; and These not
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to be punish'd suitably to the Offence committed, but to be assign'd over to the most exquisite Punishment, and that to endless Duration? I will not dwell longer on the Display of this extravagant Doctrine. The Imagination can scarce bear such shocking Impiety!

As the Divine Mind must be consider'd void of all Biass and Partial Affection; so it is also free from the least Tincture of Cruelty and Injustice. It not only knows no Partiality; but will in all Cases, and at all Times, consider Things as they really are. The Offender only will be consider'd as subject to Punishment; and that to such a Degree, as is suited to the Nature of his Offence: And no other Person will, or can, suffer for such Person's Offence; or be in any Manner liable to any the least Punishment on that Account solely. *Every One shall bear his own Iniquity: For, the Judge of all the Earth will do Right.*

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But these Dogmatical Schemers for Almighty God, not only suppose all Men, by a Disobedience they could not prevent, nor were any Way concern'd in, to be in a State obnoxious to the Divine Wrath, as they love to express it; but they go farther, and assert their total Incapacity to do any thing to reinstate them in the Divine Favour. And because they find a few Figurative Poetical Expressions in the Sacred Writings, complaining of the general Depravity of Mankind at particular Times; they conclude, in a strict and literal Sense, that *there is none that doeth good, no not One*; I do not mean, in a perfect and absolute Manner, so as perhaps no Created Being can be said to do good; but in such a Manner, as a Being of the Human Kind can at all be supposed capable of good. A Representation this of Mankind, as contrary to Truth and Fact, as any Falshood can possibly be. For, Whoever has convers'd ever so little, or ever so much, in the World; either in the Pagan, Mahometan, or Christian World;

World; must acknowledge, that the Instances of Benevolent Men, who place their Happiness in promoting That of Others, are not only certain, but numerous: Nay, that there are and have been those, who have so thoroughly approved and cherish'd these kind and good Affections, that for the Happiness of Others, an unknown Community, they have parted with Ease and Fortune, nay, Life itself.

Is not this to do good? Is not this to have a real Excellence of Nature? If not, all Distinction of Good and Evil is lost; and Men must confess, in all Arguments upon this Subject, they talk without any determinate Images at all.

But these Men go farther. They admit that such Actions have all the Appearance, as they phrase it, of Good; but that, to the Divine Mind, they are as abominable *as filthy Rags*. Thus they represent the Unerring Discerner of all Things,

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and the Rewarder of every Man according to his Works, as apprehending Things differently from what they really are, and as treating Good and Evil exactly alike; against which we find the Prophet justly uttering the Denunciation, of *Woe be to them that call Evil, Good; and Good, Evil.* Yet our Modern Revivers of this Doctrine, in this strict and peremptory Sense, lay this down as the Foundation-Stone of all their Building. Till a Person comes to have his Head thus inverted, he is not within the Bounds of Hope; he can never feel their imaginary extraordinary Operations, or ever be admitted into their Communion of Saints.

And to support the Truth and Necessity of thus believing of a Person's whole total Corruption, even while he is practising all the Duties and Virtues becoming a Christian; an Instance is given of a Gentleman, 'who is brought as a Proof how far a Man may go, and yet know nothing of Jesus Christ:' that is, according

cording to them, if it means any Thing,
 be in a State of Damnation. This Gentleman is represented, (it cannot be too often taken Notice of!) 'as one who constantly attended on the Means of Grace,
 ' was exact in his Morals, humane and
 ' courteous in his Conversation, gave
 ' much in Alms, was frequent in private
 ' Duties: and yet, till about six Weeks
 ' ago, was as destitute of any saving experimental Knowledge of Jesus Christ;
 ' as those on whom his Name was never
 ' call'd, and who still sit in Darkness, and
 ' the Shadow of Death.'

A Man, who had only read the Holy Scriptures, and taken the Religion of Christ from thence, would be at a Loss to know what such a strange contradictory Representation should be design'd to mean: That a Conformity to the Laws of Christ should leave a Person in as unsaveable a State, as those who still sit in Darkness and the Shadow of Death! — But those who have been conversant with the

Nonsense of School-Divinity are less surpris'd.

But in order to go to the Core of this Hypothesis, let us admit all that is contended for by these Gentlemen, and see what will be the Result. Let us suppose this Total Corruption, and Aversion to all Good, these Zealots contend for; and then let us admit, That God, by the Holy Ghost, now and then renews the Minds of a few Favourites, so as to be the proper Author of every good Thought and Work perform'd by them, in order to their Acceptance with Him: And all this, not so much as at the Intreaty and Request of the Persons themselves; but from His own mere Will and Pleasure; They being, according to this Scheme, incapable of making any such Request, or if they were, such Request, as theirs, being no way acceptable. And let us see what will be the Consequence.

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It need not be urged, what a Character this gives of Almighty God; but 'tis enough, to enquire how far a Man himself, who is thus suppos'd to be favour'd, is really better'd, by this imaginary Operation. And this will appear plainly, by considering, that the Grace that is thus supposed to be bestow'd, might equally be bestow'd on the Animal as well as the Rational World; or indeed on any Inanimate Thing in the World: For the Action done is no more truly and really the Action of the Person who seems to do it, than it would be the Action of any other Creature, whose Organs were made use of on the Occasion. It does not take its Rise from his Will; nor does the Concurrence of his Will give it the recommending Quality. He may approve the Disposition wrought in him for such a Purpose; and so he may the same Disposition equally when wrought in another. But with regard to real improved Excellence, the Person is exactly the same, by whom the good Action is done, as tho' it were done
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by any other Person whatsoever ; or as he would be, if such good Action were never perform'd at all.

This is the State of their Regenerated Person. How contrary to this are all the Accounts of the Christian Man in the Gospel of our Lord. Every Application to him there, is to a Creature endow'd with Free Agency ; whose Compliance with, or Refusal of, his Duty, is always suppos'd to be within his own Will or Choice ; and whose Happiness or Misery, Here and Hereafter, are made to depend on his own Conduct in the Practice of Virtue or Vice. Every Representation made by Christ himself (by whom God will judge the World in Righteousness) of the Last Judgment, fixes the Rewards and Punishments of that State solely upon the Right or Wrong Behaviour of Every Man for Himself ; not as acted upon, but as acting in, this present World.

Not

Not the least Hint, not the least Suggestion is given, that Any One had not Powers to have done every thing required of him. On the contrary, where different Powers are suppos'd, a different Account is expected, is equally accepted, and proportionably rewarded; and 'tis the slothful and wicked Servant only, who represents his Lord, *as gathering where he had not strewed*; as requiring Duty without Abilities to perform it.

Not the least Mention is made of the Personal Righteousness of Christ being imputed; his being laid hold on, or Mens having Christ dwelling within them, or rolling themselves on Him; no such unintelligible Jargon is made use of by our Blessed Lord, as the amiable recommending Quality of Those whom he will place at his Right Hand. But the Enquiry is, whether they have so learn'd Christ, so receiv'd Him, and so follow'd His Gospel, as to have practis'd all the Moral and Social Duties of Life: Whether they have fed
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the Hungry, cloath'd the Naked, and visit-
ed the Prisoner. All His Preaching, who
brought Life and Immortality to a clear
Light, was to teach us to follow after
Righteousness; and to lead a Life of
Mercy and Benevolence, in Imitation of
of our Father which is in Heaven.

The Doctrine of Regeneration, as de-
liver'd by our Lord and his Apostles, was
not built on a Supposition of the Human
Nature being totally corrupt, and vitiated
originally. On the contrary, they sup-
pose Men, whom they censure, or re-
prove, to have themselves corrupted their
Ways, and to have depraved their Un-
derstandings and Wills by Vice and Pre-
judice. 'Tis of such our Lord declares,
*Except they be converted, and become as
Little Children, they can in no wise enter
into the Kingdom of Heaven;* that is, be-
come his Disciples, and receive his Do-
ctrine: which is a Religion of the Mind, a
Religion of Vertue and Charity.

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But the Absurdity of the Modern Doctrine of the Original Total Corruption of our Nature, and of the Necessity of the Regeneration of Every One, in order to Salvation, and its Contrariety to Scripture, will further appear from hence, That our Lord Himself, in the Instance mention'd, proposes the Little Children then before him (whom our zealous Advocates for Damnation, wou'd call *Children of Wrath*, and assign over to the *Vengeance of Eternal Fire*) as Examples of that Temper of Mind and proper Disposition, which the Converted Persons, or such as were fitted to be his Followers, were to endeavour after. A plain and most evident Proof, that our Lord Himself knew nothing, and inculcated nothing, of this Romantic Doctrine of the Universal Turpitude of our Nature; or of any of the Cruel and Injurious Consequences drawn from it.

And whoever will be at the Trouble to examine the several Places in the Epistles of His Apostles, upon which these speculative Men have built such a System of Op-
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position to Truth and Righteousness, will find an exact Conformity to what is deliver'd so clearly by Christ Himself. They will find in general, or so far as concerns Christians in general; (distinct from what is peculiar to that early and special State of the Church;) that the Expressions and Phrases, of *the Spirit of Christ*, and *the Grace of God* and of *our Lord Jesus Christ*, are generally used to denote the Grace or Favour of God in the Gospel Revelation; and that Spirit, or Temper of Mind, which the Gospel of Christ emphatically recommends.

There is no doubt, but God, the Author of all Being, and the Father of Spirits, can, on special and fit Occasions, influence the Minds of Men. But then, such Influences, as far as the Influenced are concerned, must be in such a Manner, as to leave the Will of the Agent free: Else the Action produced is, as has been observ'd, no more the Action of Him to whom it seems to belong, than of any other Being whatsoever. And even where the

the Freedom of the Agent is preserved, the Action is no farther his own, than the Part he takes freely and uninfluenc'd in it. And consequently, he is no farther rewardable on Account of any such Action.

This is agreeable to the whole Tenor of Christ's Gospel; where God is represented as the kind and beneficent Father of All Men; who has display'd by Christ a clearer Way to Truth and Happiness, which every one hath it in his Power to accept or reject: To conform his Conduct to it, and so to be the Object of the Divine Approbation; or, by his own Fault in rejecting the Precepts of the Gospel, which are the Eternal Laws of Truth and Righteousness, incur the Punishment due to his Disobedience. By this will every one, who has come to its Knowledge, be judg'd: And the Determination will be such, as will be approved by the Rules of the truest Equity and Justice. No one will suffer for the Fault of Another; nor beyond the Demerit of his own Fault. Nor will the unavoidable Want

of any Light or Knowledge be a Crime before that God, who is no Respector of Persons; but will judge the World in Righteousness. He only to whom much is given, of him will much be required. And of him, who has only one Talent, no more will be expected than the right Use and Improvement of That.

If, therefore, it can be supposed, That the Author and Finisher of our Faith knew the Whole of His own Religion: If we can rely on him, rather than on the fruitful wild Fancies of Dark, Imaginative Men; let us adhere closely to His Religion, as deliver'd by Himself and His Apostles: And let us not be carried away by Pretences — 'tis hard to say — to what. Pretences! to treat them the most tenderly, of weak and heated (I hope honest) Men; such as have, in all the different Ages of the Church, built up a Faith of their own, always to the Prejudice, frequently to the Ruin, of That once deliver'd to the Saints.

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